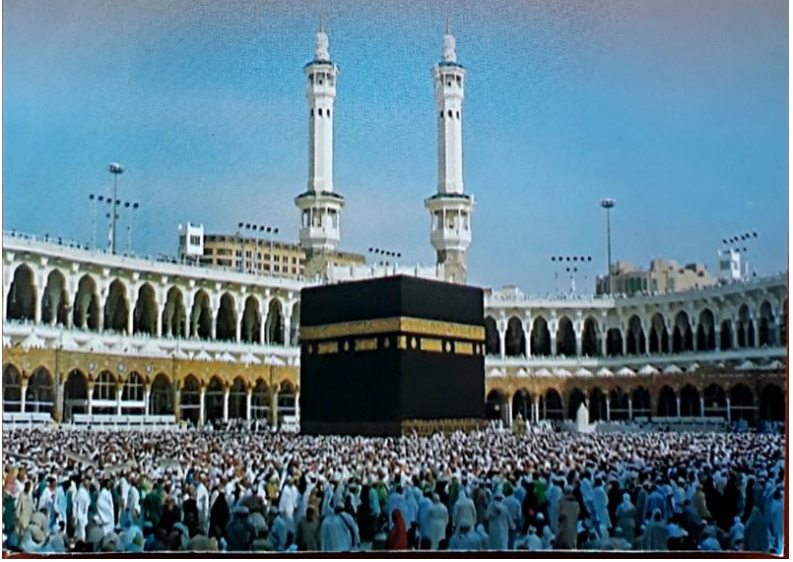
وَاعْتَصِمُوْا بِحَبْلِ اللّٰهِ جَمِيْعًا وَّلَا تَفَرَّقُوْا ۚ

Unifying The Muslim Ummah

Dr. Mehboobah Akhter
Ph.D; NET; PGDHE
Gold Medalist



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ALLEGIANCE

To my brother *Shahīd* Shabīr whose sacrifice ignited and instilled love of Islamic sciences in my heart, and therefore setting the foundation on which this book is based

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

I owe a deep gratitude to my husband Dr Sheikh Sajjad for his immense patience, encouragement, intellectual and valuable guidance during the preparation of this manuscript. My special thanks are due to my little-hearts, Sheikh Muhammad Afeeq Abdaan and Sheikh Muhammad Aleeq Abdaan

DEDICATION

I dedicate this treatise to my highfathers (patriarchs) Alhaj Sheikh Ghulam Hassan, Alhaj Muhammad Sultan and my materfamiliases (matriarchs) Noora Begum, Hafeeza Begum

FOREWORD

Dr Mehboobah Akhter has been my student at postgraduate level and a Ph.D scholar also who has written several books and has worked for her Ph.D work very seriously. She has been contributing to the development of the discipline of Islamic Studies in the Valley along with many other teachers of this newly introduced discipline of social sciences and has earned the appreciation of her peers for her hard work.

The present book is written on a very important subject i.e. unifying Muslim community, which should be the sole agenda of all the budding scholars of Islamic Studies, as the disunity among Muslims has caused great losses to Muslim community at local and global levels.

Dr Mehboobah has discussed *Salah* and other prayers of Islam and their effective role for causing the measures of unity among Muslim masses. She talks about *Tawhid* and other Islamic doctrines in this regard and bringing to fore their unifying appeal. Thus taken in its entirety, the booklet is a good attempt for creating sense of unity in the rank and file of Muslim community. I was very much fascinated the following passage of the booklet: "The unity of *Ummah* is very essential factor for the prosperity of Muslims. The most dangerous disease, which now afflicts the Muslim *Ummah*, is the disease of disagreement and discord (*Ikhtilāf*). This disease has become all-pervasive and affects every area, town and society. Its appalling influence has penetrated into ideas

and beliefs, morality and behaviour, and ways of speaking and interacting. It has affected both short and long-term goals and objectives. Like a dark spectre, it finally envelops people's souls. It poisons the atmosphere and leaves hearts sterile and desolate. Multitudes of people are left contending with one another, and the impression is given that all the Islamic teachings, commands, and prohibitions at the disposal of the *Ummah* are there only to spur people on to discord and make them revel in internecine strife. It affirms that the appearance of different schools of thought, multiple parties, groups and sects means opposition, disunity, contradiction and disagreement (*Ikhtilāf*). Establishment of parties amongst Muslims is a dangerous outbreak and all the Muslims should awake and fight against this trend tooth and nail. At this point it is the responsibility of world Muslims to warn these groups who outwardly appear to be a mercy but inwardly are an affliction. Since they divide *Ummah* into numerous parties, groups and sects, which they make, the basis for whom they are to ally with and whom to be at enmity with, and their only criterion for whom to ally with is the party itself, nothing else. Therefore, they do not give any weight to the truth if it comes to them from a direction other than their school of thought, party, group and sect, or a way other than the way of their *Da'wah*!"

I think the above passage catches the essence of this well written book. I wish the author of this book all the success!

Professor Hamidullah Marazi
(Hamid Naseem Rafiabadi)
Head Department of Religious Studies &
Dean School of Media Studies
Central University of Kashmir
Former Director
S.H. Institute of Islamic Studies
University of Kashmir

PREFACE

Praise be to Allâh Lord of the worlds, who taught man that which he did not know. We praise and thank Him, seek help from Him and ask His forgiveness, and turn to Him in repentance. We seek refuge with Him from the evils of our souls and the evils of our misdeeds. Whomever Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) guides none can misguide, and whomever Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) leads astray none can guide. I bear witness that there is no god but Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) alone without a partner, and I bear witness that Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) is His servant and Messenger. Peace and blessings be upon the most noble of the Messengers Muhammad and upon his family and Companions.

The best speech is the Book of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and the best guidance is the guidance of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم). The worst of affairs are the accretion and interpolation (*Bid'ah*) into the religion of Islam, because every accretion and interpolation (*Bid'ah*) is heresy, every heresy is deviation and misguidance, and every deviation leads to the hellfire.

Seeking knowledge is a duty upon every Muslim. The source of acquiring Islamic knowledge according to the *Ahl as-Sunnah wa al-Jamā'ah* is the Book of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and the authentic *sunnah* of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Another source of acquiring knowledge of '*aqidah* is *Ijmā*, which is the consensus of the *ummah* of Muhammad (صلى الله عليه وسلم) from the time of the

companions (رضي الله عنهم) through the next three generations that followed them. Another source of acquiring knowledge is sound reasoning that does not contradict the Qur'ân and the *sunnah*. Anyone who comes across the discussions of the followers of the *madhāhib* (ways) will not doubt that the misfortune of blind-following and blind-imitation is one of the causes of disunity of Muslims. It has transformed their minds to the extent where they do not think but with the minds of others. They have today become disillusioned and are living in atmosphere of misery and distress. The aim of this book is to assist them to emerge from this disillusionment and to start afresh with understanding and learning.

Correct creed and true belief (*Sahīh 'Aqidah*) is the sound foundation for a united Islamic society. A society that depends on correct belief in all its affairs is a united, harmonized, organized and upright society. Islam always gives prominence to live together in unity. It is the only religion, which promotes unity and solidarity. Islamic injunctions are valuable to establish peace and security. Islam also enjoins to adopt moderation in every sphere of life. Today Muslim *ummah* is standing at the threshold of trial and tribulation caused by the ever-increasing tendency of sectarianism and religious extremism (*ghuloo*). Intolerance and intensive dissemination of innovative thoughts have led the people towards irascibility and resentment. Under these circumstances, it is need of the hour to bring moderation in thinking and

mood so that the religion of Islam and human life could not be affected due to the menace of sectarianism. It is paramount responsibility to create an environment of unity, perseverance, clemency and forbearance. After analyzing the root causes and harsh ground realities, which become a source to intensify the severity of sectarianism, the condemnation of sectarianism in Islamic *Sharee'ah*, steps and measures to be taken to deracinate and eradicate this perilous sectarianism and partisanship, have been presented in this treatise.

The most dangerous disease, which now afflicts the Muslim *Ummah*, is the disease of disagreement and discord (*Ikhtilāf*). This disease has become all-pervasive and affects every area, town and society. Its appalling influence has penetrated into ideas and beliefs, morality and behaviour, and ways of speaking and interacting. It has affected both short and long-term goals and objectives. Like a dark spectre, it finally envelops people's souls. It poisons the atmosphere and leaves hearts sterile and desolate. Multitudes of people are left contending with one another, and the impression is given that all the Islamic teachings, commands, and prohibitions at the disposal of the *Ummah* are there only to spur people on to discord and make them revel in internecine strife.

It affirms that the appearance of different schools of thought, multiple parties, groups and sects means opposition, disunity, contradiction and disagreement

(*Ikhtilāf*). Establishment of parties amongst Muslims is a dangerous outbreak and all the Muslims should awake and fight against this trend tooth and nail. At this point it is the responsibility of world Muslims to warn these groups who outwardly appear to be a mercy but inwardly are an affliction. Since they divide *Ummah* into numerous parties, groups and sects, which they make, the basis for whom they are to ally with and whom to be at enmity with, and their only criterion for whom to ally with is the party itself, nothing else. Therefore, they do not give any weight to the truth if it comes to them from a direction other than their school of thought, party, group and sect, or a way other than the way of their *Da'wah*.

The Muslim world was once one state, claiming its highest legitimacy from attachment to the Qur'ân and the *Sunnah*. Now it has become more than seventy-eight small states with innumerable and extensive disagreements among themselves. Each one of these states loudly professes unity, but in each state one finds several often conflicting entities as well as of facially sponsored 'Islamic' bodies. Often those working for the cause of Islam today who are ostensibly connected with the task of restoring the *Ummah* are not in reality in a better situation than the official organizations which they manage.

The early Muslims too had disagreements, but theirs were differences of opinion and not reasons for estrangement and schism (*shiqaaq*). They differed but

they did not separate. This was because the unity of hearts and of objectives was far more important to them than selfish considerations. They managed to rid themselves of personal weaknesses and were keen to recognize and correct any lapses they committed. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) once told his companions (رضي الله عنهم) about a man who was among the best of them and about the good news that he was of those destined for paradise. They examined the person's attitude and conduct to understand the reason for his supreme achievement. The Prophet (صلى الله عليه وسلم) eventually told them that the person's achievement was because he never went to sleep while there was a trace of rancor in his heart against any Muslim. The source of the calamity, which afflicts us today, is within us, deep in our hearts. Our tendencies towards isolationism are merely an expression of self-betrayal. In external aspects, we might not differ much from others.

The effects of discord (*khilaaf*) among Muslims or the perpetuation of its causes is, it must be stressed, a great treason to the goals of Islam. It is tantamount to destroying the contemporary Islamic awakening, which has revitalized the hopes and aspirations of Muslims. It is a hindrance to the onward march of Islam. It dissipates the sincere efforts of those striving in the cause of Islam and would incur the displeasure of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى). Today, for these reasons, one of the most important obligations on Muslims in general and on those who work for Islam in particular- after belief in Allâh (سبحانه

وتعالى) (*Tauhîd*)- is to work for the unification of all Islamic groups and elements and to eradicate all factors causing discord among them. If this goal proves impossible to achieve, then let us keep our differences to the minimum and well within the ethics and norms of behavior set by our righteous forbears. Differences of opinion do not prevent a genuine meeting of hearts in order to bring about a renewal of the noble Islamic life. This can be achieved only when intentions are sincere and purely for the sake of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى). When this becomes a reality, support and success from Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) will not be denied (*In-Shā-Allâh*).

Today, voices are raised calling for unification of these groups and to bring these *Jamā'ahs* together. During the contemporary period, Muslim *Ummah* has tried to gather what remained of its strength to win back its lost glory and recover its balance. All attempts in this direction, however, have ended up in failure because the means adopted were flawed and not in accordance with the natural laws and patterns set by Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى). These attempts have been based on adopting and following alien paradigms and aping the foreign masters, both of which have only compounded the predicament. The most important reason for the failure of attempts to unify the (Muslims) ranks is the absence of a single and uniform *'Aqidah* and *Manhaj* (creed, methodology and approach). It is very clear and something about which no two can differ, that these *Jamā'ahs* whilst having

produced ‘some good’ have also sown the seeds that have caused the *ummah* to splinter and lose its overall unity.

At the time when chaos prevails in the world and individuals as well as nations for lack of understanding Islam are rushing at the throats of each other, when Muslims have lost faith in Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى), we are asking *ummah* to unite and we are seeking unity for universal love and brotherhood, world peace, harmony and human happiness. Nevertheless, unity should be based on the Book of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and the *sunnah* of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), not at the expenses of Book of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and the *sunnah* of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). Therefore, this treatise is a method to solve the discord and a course to elucidate the truth.

The *Ummah* has suffered enough. Now is the time for us to come to our senses and steadfastly follow the right course in the light of the Qur’ân and the *Sunnah*. We entertain the hope that Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى), through the efforts of the righteous Muslims of this generation, will rescue this *Ummah* and lead it to the shores of safety and security after centuries of perilous wandering and error (*In-Shā-Allâh*).

My only reason for writing this treatise has been to earn the pleasure of Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and to clarify the truth to all who are interested in hearing and accepting it. We all should free ourselves from prejudice

and wild ideas, and avoid making inflammatory and insulting charges that fuel the emotions, block the path to truth, and widen the chasm between us. These things do nothing but dissipate the spirit of peace and harmony. One should, however, beware of aggressive ignorance, the arrogant claims of fanatics, the troublesome and contentious nature of those who are obstinate, and the intrigue and plotting of conspirators. Refuting all of these tendencies head-on and clearly and frankly exposing the conflicting positions and interests of the various Islamic groupings may not bring peace, calm, and cooperation in the Muslim arena.

This book is a small attempt to chart the way ahead. Conscious of the profound tragedy, which engulfs us, we ask Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) to make this work beneficial to the Muslim *ummah*. Those who do not give precedence to anything before Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم), so that they may unsheathe the sword of knowledge and wisdom, which Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) and His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم) says 'And ride upon the back of the truth, which is acquiring knowledge along with its proof (*daleel*).' Thus expelling from Islam the alterations of those going beyond bounds, the false claims of the deceptive, the misinterpretations of the ignorant, the bigotry of the blind-followers and blind-imitators, and those who pick and choose from the Qur'ân and divide religion of Islam into parties and sects, and become separate groups.

I am firmly convinced that we must begin with a sincere commitment to truth and believe that the struggle between the truth and the falsehood will continue until the Day of Resurrection. I equally believe that the truth must be presented without recourse to insults, curses or profanity. Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) has commanded us to observe the highest standards of dignity and self-respect when we argue with the people. Therefore, it is incumbent on us to show even more respect to the people of our Book when we come to disagree and discuss these differences and dissents.

I ask Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) to teach us what is beneficial for us, to make us benefit from what He has taught us, and to increase our knowledge. May He unite us in the pursuit of truth, guide us to the right path, and crown all our actions with success. May He guard us against the evils of our thoughts and actions. May He protect us from the folly of "breaking into shreds the yarn which was once tightly spun and strong." I look forward to the day when Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) would unite Muslim communities with His Book and the *Sunnah* of His Messenger (صلى الله عليه وسلم). May Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى) hasten the day when He would bind our hearts together, after this long and bitter separation that has only benefited the enemies and adversaries of the Muslims, and opponents of Islam, and given them an ugly advantage from the beginning of our estrangement right up to today. In Him we seek refuge and on His might we

depend. All praise and thanks are due to Allâh (سبحانه وتعالى), the Lord and Sustainer of all the worlds.

Seeker of her Lord's forgiveness,

Dr Mehboobah Akhter, Ph.D; NET; PGDHE
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WORDS OF ENCOURAGEMENT

Dr Sayyid Muhammad Yunus Gilani

In His name Who taught us what we knew not!

Muslims, of whatever shade, trend, denomination, school of thought or practice, have more common roots & principles, ideals, common ultimate destiny, spiritual, social & civilizational target and agenda of construction and development, enjoining good & eradicating evils and standing firm for the truth and universal justice. Any word of mouth or writing that leads to the integration, unity & unification of Muslims locally, regionally, globally and universally, in service of the humanity and to the pleasure of the Creator, acknowledging and appreciating the genuine natural creative differences, is highly appreciable. That has been my endeavour and that of my serious students. And hope that is what, Dr Mehboobah Akhter, the author of this booklet aims at.

Dr Sayyid Muhammad Yunus Gilani
Professor
Department of KIRKHS
International Islamic University
Malaysia

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Prof Mohammad Maqbool Rather

It is a matter of pride and pleasure for me that one of our faculty members, Dr Mehboobah Akhter, has authored this masterpiece wherein every chapter/ topic is authenticated either by quotes taken from the Holy

Qur'ân or *Ahadīth* from most authentic books like Sahīh Bukhārī, Sahīh Muslim, Jamia Tirmidhī, Ibn-i-Mājah etc.

To have knowledge of the topics chosen by the writer is of immense importance for every practising Muslim. The author is highly impressed by the verse of the Holy Qur'ân: "O you who believe! Obey Allah, and obey the Messenger (Muhammad صلى الله عليه وسلم) and render not vain your deeds." [Al Qur'ân Muhammad 47:33]

I congratulate the author for taking this daring step of spreading the true message of Islam among the masses, and pray to Almighty Allah that she is rewarded for this endeavour in this world and hereafter (Aameen).

Prof Mohammad Maqbool Rather
Principal
Government Degree College for Women
Sopore Jammu & Kashmir

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Dr Naseem Gul Dar

The author, Dr Mehboobah Akhter, has dealt with a topic, which is of utmost importance for the scattered Muslim world, given the fact that whole of the Muslim world is in shambles, and is being blundered by the evil forces of the world. It is a fact that a cautious intellect will not remain mute after observing the fault lines beneath the Muslims, which are responsible for the downfall

internally to a nation, which at a point of time were governing the whole world justly. Hope that the readers both common and the scholars will pay heed towards the subject matter and will try to unify the Muslims, which indirectly will lead to a renaissance. The work is really a commendable addition to the scholarly works on Islam. I wish the author best of luck.

Dr Naseem Gul Dar
Assistant Professor
Department of Islamic Studies
Baba Ghulam Shah Badshah University
Rajouri Jammu & Kashmir

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Dr Altaf Hussain Yatoo

According to Shaykh al-Hind, Maulana Mahmud al-Hasan, discord among the *Ummah* and deviation from the Qur'an are the main reasons behind the Muslim decline. The author, Dr Mehboobah Akhter, in this treatise, has successfully tried to address both these issues. This book has the capacity to bridge the gulf between different thought patterns among the *Ummah* on the basis of *Tauhid* and *Sunnah*. Hope that the sincerity of purpose exhibited by the author on a non-sectarian basis will be well received by the readers without becoming judgemental and for this purpose the reader would have to approach the treatise with a deconditioned mind. As such, the treatise is an open invitation for every unbiased

mind to refresh his/her faith with the epiphany (*Tajalli*) of *Tauhid* and *Sunnah*!

Dr Altaf Hussain Yatoo
Assistant Professor
Department of Islamic Studies
Government Degree College Tangdhar
Karnah Kupwara Jammu & Kashmir

****

Ms Tajali Maryam

The author, Dr Mehboobah Akhter, regards this work as an essential element in the treatment of a grievous and widespread malady that is presently besetting the Muslim world. Indeed, this is the disease of discord and division that has arisen from a faulty understanding of Islam. Muslims must relearn the art and etiquette of agreeing to disagree and thus become more capable of dealing with potentially divisive situations and issues. "Unifying the Muslim *Ummah*" comes at a time of acute and painful divisions and conflicts in the Muslim world. It is hoped that it will (*In-Sha-Allâh*) contribute in some measure to a rising of consciousness of the paramount need for Muslim unity and solidarity. I wish the budding author a great success ahead.

Ms Tajali Maryam
M.A., NET Islamic Studies
University of Kashmir
Jammu & Kashmir

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ABOUT THE AUTHOR

Dr. Mehboobah Akhter was born in Sopore Kashmir. Upon attaining her Bachelor's degree in Science (B.Sc) from Degree College Sopore in the year 2001 and Post-Graduation (M.A) in Islamic Studies from S.H. Institute of Islamic Studies, University of Kashmir in 2004, went on to pursue and procure her Post Graduate Diploma in Arabic, besides Masters in Education (M.Ed). In the same year, she was awarded Research Fellowship (JRF/SRF) and NET by the University Grants Commission (UGC) New Delhi. She pursued Ph.D from S.H. Institute of Islamic Studies University of Kashmir, and in 2011, she was awarded doctorate degree in Islamic Studies. She was conferred prestigious Gold Medal by the University of Kashmir for her exceptional and outstanding performance in Islamic Studies. She has worked in the same institution for several years as teaching faculty before joining as Assistant Professor in the Department of Higher Education, Government of Jammu and Kashmir. Over her fifteen years of accrued experience, she has vigorously worked in the areas of college and university education, and research and development. She has authored many reputed books on Islam, one amongst them is "Muslims in the valley of Kashmir- A critical analysis and the Islamic perspective", the only treatise written and published on the distorted creed of Muslims of Kashmir in English language in the history of Kashmir. She has many research papers of national and international repute to her credit.

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